

The Nightmare Before Christmas: Trump Shutdown Harms Working Families and Federal Employees

“I will shut down the government... I am proud to shut down the government... I will take the mantle. I will be the one to shut it down.” – President Trump, 12/11/18

Just days before Christmas, President Trump is gearing up to shut down the government over his costly, ineffective border wall. Both parties have agreement on six of the remaining seven appropriations bills, leaving President Trump’s insistence on border wall funding as the only outstanding issue to resolve. If he forces a shutdown tonight, it will leave hundreds of thousands of federal employees without pay over the holidays.

- Approximately 800,000 employees will be forced to work without pay or be furloughed at the Departments of State, Agriculture, Interior, Treasury, Justice, Commerce, Homeland Security, Transportation, and Housing and Urban Development; the Environmental Protection Agency; NASA; the Peace Corps, the Small Business Administration; and other independent agencies.
- Approximately 420,000 federal employees will be forced to work without pay, including:
 - Nearly 14,000 agents at the FBI
 - 3,600 Deputy U.S. Marshals
 - Nearly 4,400 agents at the Drug Enforcement Administration
 - Over 2,600 agents at the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives
 - Over 16,700 Bureau of Prisons Correctional Officers
 - 54,000 Customs and Border Protection agents and customs officers
 - 42,000 Coast Guard employees
 - 53,000 TSA employees
 - Over 5,800 Secret Service employees, including Secret Service agents
 - 6,000 Forest Service Firefighters
- In addition, thousands of government contractors – employees who work side-by-side federal employees – may not be reimbursed by their companies during a shutdown.

These federal employees are living under a cloud of uncertainty, which impacts their ability to plan and effectively serve the American people.

Jacque Simon, policy director for the American Federation of Government Employees:

“At the operational level, our people have not been given instructions for how to wind down... Right now, everyone is just acting in a state of uncertainty.” [Washington Post, [12/20/18](#)]

As a result of furloughs, the safety and well-being of Americans will be negatively impacted:

- Public safety and law enforcement programs will be undermined.
- Consumer protection and services to identity theft victims will halt.
- Food safety inspections will be curtailed.

- Research at agencies like National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and the National Institute of Standards and Technology will halt.
- Training for emergency responders, Foreign Service officers, and TSA airport security screeners will be canceled.
- Over 30 million small businesses will lose access to loans and technical assistance.
- Home mortgage loan processing and approvals will be delayed.
- Loans for farmers provided through the Farm Service Agency will be delayed ahead of planting season this spring.
- Visitor centers and restrooms at National Park Service sites will not be accessible, and without full staffing, visitor safety could be at risk.
- Delivery of \$1.2 billion in emergency food aid to food banks and soup kitchens will be affected.
- Repairs to housing for low-income residents will be put on hold.
- American diplomats will be put at risk.
- Financial sanctions against countries such as Syria, Russia, and Iran will be curtailed.

Over the years, Republicans have pursued shutdowns as a policy when they don't get their way:

- November 13, 1995 – 5-day shutdown
- December 15, 1995 – 21-day shutdown
- September 30, 2013 – 16-day shutdown
- January 19, 2018 – 2-day shutdown

And each time the economy suffers:

“The government shutdown cost the nation's economy at least \$24 billion and shaved 0.6 percent off the nation's economic growth, according to new analysis from Standard & Poor's... ‘The bottom line is the government shutdown has hurt the U.S. economy,’ the firm said.” [The Hill, [10/16/13](#)]

“A Congressional Research Service review of various private-sector forecasts after the 16-day October 2013 shutdown, which involved all federal agencies, found anywhere from a 0.1 percent to 0.6 percent reduction in the growth of real gross domestic product in the fourth quarter of that year... Real GDP growth dropped in late 1995 and early 1996 after two shutdowns totaling 28 days, jumping again after the stalemate ended.” [CQ Budget Tracker, [12/13/18](#)]

As a reminder, a recent [NPR poll](#) shows a strong majority of Americans believe the President should compromise and avoid a shutdown:

- 57% Americans think the president should compromise on the wall to avoid a government shutdown;
- 69% of Americans do not believe building a wall should even be an immediate priority for Congress, including 50% who do not believe [the border wall] should be a priority at all.

While House Democrats don't believe that kicking the can down the road is the best option, we stand ready to vote with House Republicans for the Senate-passed Continuing Resolution to prevent a Trump shutdown. We urge the President to agree to sign that legislation and keep government open and operating on behalf of the American people.

Office of Democratic Whip Steny H. Hoyer, 12/21/2018